

Fortunately, through community support and true dedication by the students, the cross display remained on the school's lawn for a full week as originally planned.

But we have to pause to ask would the display have been criticized at all if the crosses represented deaths from cancer or drunk driving accidents instead of abortion? I fear, especially as we near the National Day of Prayer, that this story is yet another example of the way in which freedom of religious expression is coming under attack in our Nation.

America was built upon Judeo-Christian values, but this very important element of our culture is now all too often not only ignored but also frowned upon. Children have been barred from bowing their heads in private prayer, from writing of their religious beliefs in school papers, and even from bringing the Bible to school.

I think it is a sad commentary on our Nation that we can have a serious debate on the House floor about using taxpayer dollars to buy hypodermic needles for drug addicts, and, yet, a child cannot read the Bible in his or her school library.

This is the very reason that the Religious Freedom Amendment, introduced by my good friend, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. ISTOOK), is so important to our Nation. The Religious Freedom Amendment protects the freedom of religion which we have enjoyed for so long under our Constitution, but which has been suppressed by recent court actions and trends.

It retains the First Amendment safeguard against official religion and keeps school prayer voluntary, but protects it just as other forms of free speech are protected.

In other words, the Religious Freedom Amendment protects religious expression like school prayer and the students' display at Lutheran High School in Westland, Michigan. It also, of course, retains the right of others to express their disapproval of any such display or to abstain from group prayer.

The key is everyone's rights are protected. Again, I repeat, the key is everyone's rights are protected. This was the case in Westland where, fortunately, the Religious Freedom Amendment was not necessary this year, as the students were not required to remove their display.

The school officials and students are quick to point out that the criticism of their cross display actually turned into a positive by generating publicly an overwhelmingly amount of support for their cause. But it is not always the case, as I indicated earlier. Other displays of religious expression, including private prayer, have been banned by law in locations nationwide.

In my opinion, and in the opinion of 75 percent of Americans polled, it is critical for Congress to pass legislation that ensures the religious liberties once again receive full protection in

America. I urge my colleagues to support the Religious Liberties Amendment that has been offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. ISTOOK) and others on the House side.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CINCO DE MAYO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, today is Cinco de Mayo, the 5th of May, which is celebrated throughout the Americas. It is a day of celebration for those who have their roots and heart in Mexico. It is a special day in history for Mexican and Mexican-Americans because, on the 5th of May in 1862, a very small, poorly armed band of Mexicans defeated, in an unbalanced contest, their colonial oppressors; as history records, too, that just several years after defeating their oppressors, that Mexican independence was lost and there was oppression in the country.

□ 1830

That is the day we celebrate today.

I come before the House tonight, and I have come many times to talk about the situation in our country relating to illegal narcotics. And I wish I could come here and celebrate the Cinco de Mayo with other Mexican Americans and supporters of Mexico but, in fact, I am not here to praise Mexico but to condemn Mexico on this occasion.

In fact, today, Mexico is a source of 50 percent of the hard narcotics entering the United States of America. Not only are these drugs entering the United States, but they are also corrupting the Mexico that these Mexican individuals fought on the 5th of May in 1862 to free their country and their people. Drugs are oppressing Mexico and they are destroying the United States of America.

We have tried to work with Mexico. I serve on the Committee on National Security of the Congress that deals with our national drug policy. We did not decertify Mexico last year or this year, and we should have. And I have sponsored resolutions and supported them in both instances, but they have not passed, for whatever reasons. But we should have decertified Mexico.

Mexico, to date, has not extradited one drug felon or one drug offender to the United States. And one reason they were not decertified was because we sought their cooperation in these areas such as extradition.

Mexico, to date, has, in fact, refused to allow our agents to arm themselves. Mexico, in fact, has not signed a mari-

time agreement. And the only other country is Haiti, and they have not done that because they have not organized their government. But Mexico is the only country I know of in the Western Hemisphere to not sign a maritime agreement. And the list goes on and on of failure to cooperate.

So we are not celebrating a happy Cinco de Mayo here in Congress. I am not. I am concerned that, again, that Mexicans who fought for freedom, for independence, for the right of the people to live in an open society and a free society are being oppressed because of drug trafficking within the country of Mexico and the drugs that have come into the United States.

If my colleagues do not think it is a problem, 50 percent of those hard drugs coming into the United States have put 2 million Americans behind bars. We have 20,000 deaths in the United States that are drug related. The cost to the American taxpayer is now \$16 billion. And we can lay at the doorstep of the Mexican Government the responsibility for so many of these illegal narcotics coming into the United States.

It is a sad commentary that our neighbors, in fact, are sending chemical weapons into the United States and chemical destruction, which is also destroying that country and its freedom that was fought for by these heroes on May 5th of 1862.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that I can come a year from now, on May 5th, 1999, and say that indeed the Mexicans have cooperated as neighbors, as friends in this hemisphere to gain their own people's freedom from the drug trafficking, from corruption and from the depression that it has brought to their society, and also free our country from the oppression, from the deaths that it has caused and from the drugs that are on our streets, in our schools, and in our communities.

FUNDING FOR THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, today I call on both the Democratic and Republican leaders of the House to pass the \$18 billion International Monetary Fund as soon as possible. It is urgent for Hawaii's citizens, workers, and the businesses that I represent.

In early winter 1997, economies in South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia collapsed. The effects on Hawaii have stifled recovery from the deepest recession the State has experienced in 50 years.

Problems began when the Japanese economy faltered in 1991. Tourism and direct foreign investment plunged. Devaluation of the yen and now other

Asian currencies have resulted in the Hawaii recession.

Unemployment is at 6.5 percent. And by the way, Mr. Speaker, the 6.5 percent may not seem very high to some others in the country who have experienced much greater percentages in times past, but for Hawaii that is a very, very high number.

Tourism last month dropped 14 percent from March a year ago. Costs for the Japanese tourist or businessperson are more than 50 percent higher than they were in 1991. Investment decline has resulted in construction contract receipts falling 40 percent since 1991. Business and individual bankruptcy are at record high levels.

Business, labor, industry, and government in Hawaii are working on solutions but cannot provide direct economic aid to Asian countries or restructure Asian economies. Only Congress can and must do that in conjunction with the IMF.

Current funding proposals have been derailed over unrelated issues, such as abortion. There are adequate vehicles for dealing with those issues, and the leadership should drop them and bring an IMF bill to the House floor immediately.

Economists indicate it will take 1 to 3 years for Asian economies to recover, even with IMF aid. Although there is no quick fix, we must start now, because Hawaii and the U.S. economies are being damaged by inaction. And I stress the U.S. economy in general as well as that of Hawaii in particular, Mr. Speaker.

Knowing the relationship between IMF and America's foreign trade, which includes tourism and the movement of investment capital, President Clinton recently said that IMF funding was something "we owe to the future of this country and to our children." That certainly applies to Hawaii.

That is why I wrote today to the Speaker and Democratic leader, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT) urging immediate action. I have the letter here, Mr. Speaker, and I will submit it as part of my remarks.

Threat of economic destabilization remains, and delay is only intensifying the problem. The IMF must be allowed to do its job, including helping restructure the economic systems in Asia which resulted in the need for the multibillion-dollar bailout. But the IMF cannot do its job without the funding necessary to stabilize these economies.

Mr. Speaker, we must not put America's economic well-being at risk by ignoring the Asian financial crisis. We must not put Hawaii's economic well-being at risk by ignoring the Asian financial crisis. I urge that the IMF bill, the International Monetary Fund bill, be brought to the House floor immediately.

Mr. Speaker, the letter I earlier referred to is as follows:

NEIL ABERCROMBIE,
1ST DISTRICT, HAWAII,
May 5, 1997.

Hon. NEWT GINGRICH,
U.S. Capitol Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: On behalf of the people of Hawaii who have been suffering through the toughest economic times in more than half a century, I urge that the funding bill be brought to the House floor expeditiously. I am deeply concerned about the failure of the House of Representatives to act on the \$18 billion in emergency funding for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to deal with the Asian financial crisis.

As you may know, during the last quarter of 1997, a financial crisis swept through several Asian countries. In response, the IMF came up with proposals to strengthen the economies of Thailand, South Korea, Indonesia and Malaysia and, in the process, reduce the threat of destabilization to the rest of Asia and the Pacific Rim. In this regard, it is vital that Congress provide the IMF with the necessary resources to adequately deal with the Asian financial crisis. Failure to enact IMF funding potentially jeopardizes our nation's ability to sustain economic growth. In Hawaii, the effects are more immediate. The Asian financial crisis, combined with the problems of the Japanese economy, has already had a negative economic impact on the state. Continued neglect by Congress will exacerbate this situation and make it more difficult for Hawaii to deal with its greatest economic challenge since statehood.

Since 1991, Hawaii's economy has been stagnant. Since that time, the bankruptcy rate has skyrocketed and our unemployment rate has grown and now ranks among the highest in the nation. The primary reason for Hawaii's economic problems can be attributed to the decline in travel and tourism from Japan and other Asian countries as well as the consequences of direct foreign capital being withdrawn from investment in the state. In March, the number of visitors to Hawaii was down by 40,000 compared to the same time last year. The most dramatic loss was in the number of East-bound visitors from Asia which declined 14 per cent. Equally profound is the impact of the Yen currency devaluation. Today, it costs a Japanese tourist or businessperson 50 percent more to stay in Hawaii than it did in 1991. No sector of Hawaii's economy has been left untouched. Take for instance the construction industry; contract receipts for construction fell in 1997 to \$2.9 billion, down from \$3.2 billion in 1996, continuing into a 40 percent decline since 1991.

Emergency funding for the IMF will not provide a quick fix to the Asian financial crisis. The situation in Asia developed over decades and economists have indicated that the IMF-supervised policy adjustments will take one to three years before they take hold. Yet, passage of the \$18 billion in emergency financing for the IMF funding is a necessary step in resolving the crisis. I fear that inaction by Congress will only intensify the problem.

I understand there are many members of Congress who hold strong views on issues which have become inextricably and unfairly linked to the IMF funding bill. Congress has many legislative vehicles with which to deliberate issues such as the abortion policies of other nations. Holding the IMF funding hostage to unrelated issues is not fair and runs counterproductive to the efforts of all sectors of Hawaii society—business, industry, labor and government—to resolve our economic problems. Although there are steps that all of those parties can and are taking, it is far beyond their authority to address

the need to restructure economies of Asian countries. That is the proper role for the IMF, Congress, and the federal government.

I strongly urge that you and the other members of the Republican leadership take immediate steps to resolve the emergency funding issues for the IMF. We should not put the well-being of our nation's economy at risk by ignoring the Asian financial crisis. Emergency funding for the IMF cannot be held captive to unrelated issues.

Sincerely,

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
Member of Congress

SOUTH DAKOTANS SEND MESSAGE OF ZERO TOLERANCE IN WAR ON DRUGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up this evening for just a moment on the discussion that the gentleman from Florida started earlier, having to do with the whole war on drugs.

When we discuss the war on drugs in America today, we hear a lot about the phrase "zero tolerance." I think zero tolerance means different things in different places. What I would like to do today is talk a little bit about the definition of zero tolerance in my home State of South Dakota.

We are fortunate in South Dakota to have a relatively low crime rate compared with other parts of the country. In fact, we never really thought that we had a drug problem. Drugs were something that were dealt with in the metropolitan areas of this country and, frankly, we did not think much about drugs in rural America.

But that is changing, due in part to a new drug called methamphetamine, or "meth," or "crank" for short. In 1997, meth seizures in South Dakota doubled. Oftentimes this drug makes it into the Midwest from Mexico via the interstate. It is becoming a heartland epidemic in neighboring States like Iowa and Missouri as well.

Last year South Dakota joined Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, and Missouri in being designated as part of the high-intensity drug trafficking area. The drug lends itself to rural areas. Manufacturing methamphetamine is a messy and smelly process. Cooking up meth creates a pungent, easily detectable odor.

As a result, many meth manufacturers choose to set up in rural areas. They find an old building on an abandoned Midwestern farmstead and they are in business. If they have access to an interstate highway, they have a way to ship it out. Once they are in business, the rural nature of our communities make it very difficult to catch the dealers. In fact, it is pretty hard. My colleagues can imagine trying to get an undercover narcotics agent slipped into a town of 300 people, unnoticed.

The close-knit neighborliness, which has so long insulated us in rural areas